

Union House
University of Surrey
Guildford
GU2 7XH

Dear Angela Richardson,


We hope this letter finds you well in troubled times.

As students & staff at the University of Surrey, we have watched in horror at the scale of violence that is being used against peaceful protestors in the USA. These peaceful protestors are showing the world that Black Lives Matter, however they have been met with undue force, tear gas, batons, rubber bullets and violence by the same people that took a vow to protect them. For the first time in History, all 50 states are united in making sure that Black Lives Matter, not just in the USA, but all over the world. This has sparked worldwide protest, with one happening on our doorstep in Guildford just this weekend gone, attended by students & staff alike, showing you the solidarity and want of the Guildford community.

As a Students Union we are committed to protecting our staff & students from the prejudice they may face due to the colour of their skin. If the movement fighting for racial equality due to the passing of George Floyd and many others was not enough, our students are met every day with the possibility of health inequalities & disparities, the worries that they may not be treated in line with their fellow students, the concerns that they will be unduly targeted by law enforcement in Surrey and have taken to the streets to express this rage.

A recent Black Attainment Gap report published by one of our Sabbatical Officers drew heavily on the concerns and worries that black students experience while they are at Surrey and as their Students Union, it is our role to advocate for them. A number of fears & recommendations emerged as a result of the report, recommendations that we hope to implement over the coming year. Student Union Officers are elected to represent students, regardless of our background or skin colour, and we are asking you to do the same.

It is disconcerting to see the Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Dominic Raab MP, refuse to hold the President of the United States, Donald Trump, to account for the violent actions against peaceful protestors. As Foreign Secretary, it is his role to call out threats to democratic participation as they occur across the globe, and as our MP, it is your role to represent the interests and views of your constituents. If Dominic Raab is unable to speak up



against undue violence used in the US, then how are we able to trust him to represent our interest and fight for the safety & security of the British Community.


However, the issues do not just lie in the USA. The UK exports tear gas, riot shields & rubber bullets to law enforcement in the USA, to many students this represents the backing of the British Government towards the actions the American Government have taken. Students Unions across the country have one primary aim, to represent our students, how can we effectively represent our students when the sector are answering to a government with these beliefs? Students at the University of Surrey should not be afraid to leave their houses, they should not be afraid to speak their mind, they should not be afraid to be heard, and as a Union, we will do everything we can to support this. 42% of our students are Black or come from an Ethnic Minority group, this makes up half of our student population. Without these students we would not have the incredibly diverse population that we do, we would not have amazing displays of culture at events such as the One World Showcase and we would certainly not have the amazing community that we aim to celebrate here at Surrey.

In the coming days, protestors will take to the streets, alongside our very own students, standing side by side with our Black & Ethnic Minority students, in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter protests in the USA, but also to show solidarity in tackling the clear racial oppression that takes place right under our noses.

As a Students Union we call on you, our MP and our Representative, to:

- Write to Dominic Raab MP and ask him to condemn the words and the actions of the President of the USA, and call for him to suspend the attacks on protestors.
- Write to the Prime Minister and ask him to denounce Trump's militarisation of the protests in the USA.
- Write to the Home Secretary Priti Patel and ask her to make assurances that UK protestors will not be met with excessive use of force.
- Call on the government to immediately suspend licences for tear gas, riot shields and rubber bullets to the USA.

Alongside this, as a student population, we ask you to personally commit to increasing your understanding of these issues and tackle them head on when encountered. Also look further out into your Surrey community. Even outside of the University, Surrey is incredibly diverse and is made up of individuals from a huge variety of different backgrounds, this should be celebrated and not condemned. Look at the law enforcement in Surrey, ensure that they are there to keep out community safe and not there to hurt our people.



This letter has been signed by members of our student community who want to make a change, who want to see the elimination of racial oppression in Surrey and across the globe. We hope that you, alongside your parliamentary colleagues, understand the wants and needs of our students & staff and strive to make them feel safe and heard in society.

Signed: